of their dues to lending institutions. Banks have also been advised to ensure maximum recovery at minimum expense through compromise proposals rather than through expensive litigation spread over a long period. For such settlements the banks are required to make proper distinction between wilful defaulters and the borrowers defaulting due to circumstances beyond their control.

Nationalised/Rural Banks in Punjab

331. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the branch-wise number of nationalised banks and rural banks that have been opened in the state of Punjab during the years 1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97;

(b) if so, the district-wise details thereof; and

(c) whether Government have any scheme during the current financial year to connect all districts and villages particularly in border areas with bank facilities in the State of Pubjab?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) Reserve Bank of India has reported that under 1990—95 Branch Expansion Programme it was decided that future growth of bank offices should be guided only on well established need for offices and financial viability of proposed branches. As such the decision for opening the branches at particular centres is left to the discretion of the banks themselves.

Discontentment on recommened pay scales by Fifth Pay Commission

332. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Fifth Pay Commission has submitted its report; if so, the salient recommendations thereof;

(b) whether Government have taken, any decision thereon, if not, by what date will the decision be taken, particularly on the retirement age keeping in view the fact that a large number of Government servants retire every month;

(c) whether the trade unions have expressed their discontentment on the recommendations of the Pay Commission particularly on the vast difference between the lowest and the highest pay scale and virtually no increase in the perks upto the section officer level; and

(d) if so, what action Government is taking to remove the discontentment of the employees?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (d) The Pay Commission has submitted its final Report on 30th January, 1997 to the Government. The Commission has made wide ranging recommendations covering all aspects of service conditions of the Central Government employees, including the Armed Forces personnel. The Commission has, inter alia, recommended that the age of retirement may be increased from 58 years to 60 years, except for personnel of the Central Police Organisations and the Armed Forces and also excluding those employees who are on extension. Some Associations/Unions of the Central Government Employees have represented to the Government against certain recommendations of the Commission. The Government have set up an Empowered Committee to process the recommendations of the Commission. The views of the employees will be ascertained through the National Council of the Joint Consultative Machinery and will be kept in view before taking appropriate decisions.

Profit/loss position of Nationalised Banks

333. SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the profit and loss position of the nationalised banks, bank-wise in the country during the last three years;

(b) the number of scheduled private banks in the country and how many of them are running at a loss, details thereof;

(c) the profit and loss position of the nationalised banks prior to nationalisation;